
My Life as a Refugee

REBECCA CRIST



Every day you make thousands of decisions.
Now imagine you're a refugee, forced to flee your home to escape war
or persecution. Suddenly, each choice can be a matter of life or death.
Have you got what it takes to survive?

Continue →



Overview

Refugee (or My Life as a Refugee) is a digital choose-your-own-adventure story that allows the user to experience the life and struggles of a refugee as they flee their homeland and seek a better life. There are three routes with different protagonists, storylines, and choices to make.

This app was developed by the UNHCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) in June of 2012, and was updated most recently a month after its release. As a result, the information is not as current as it could be. However, this does not negate the worth of the app.

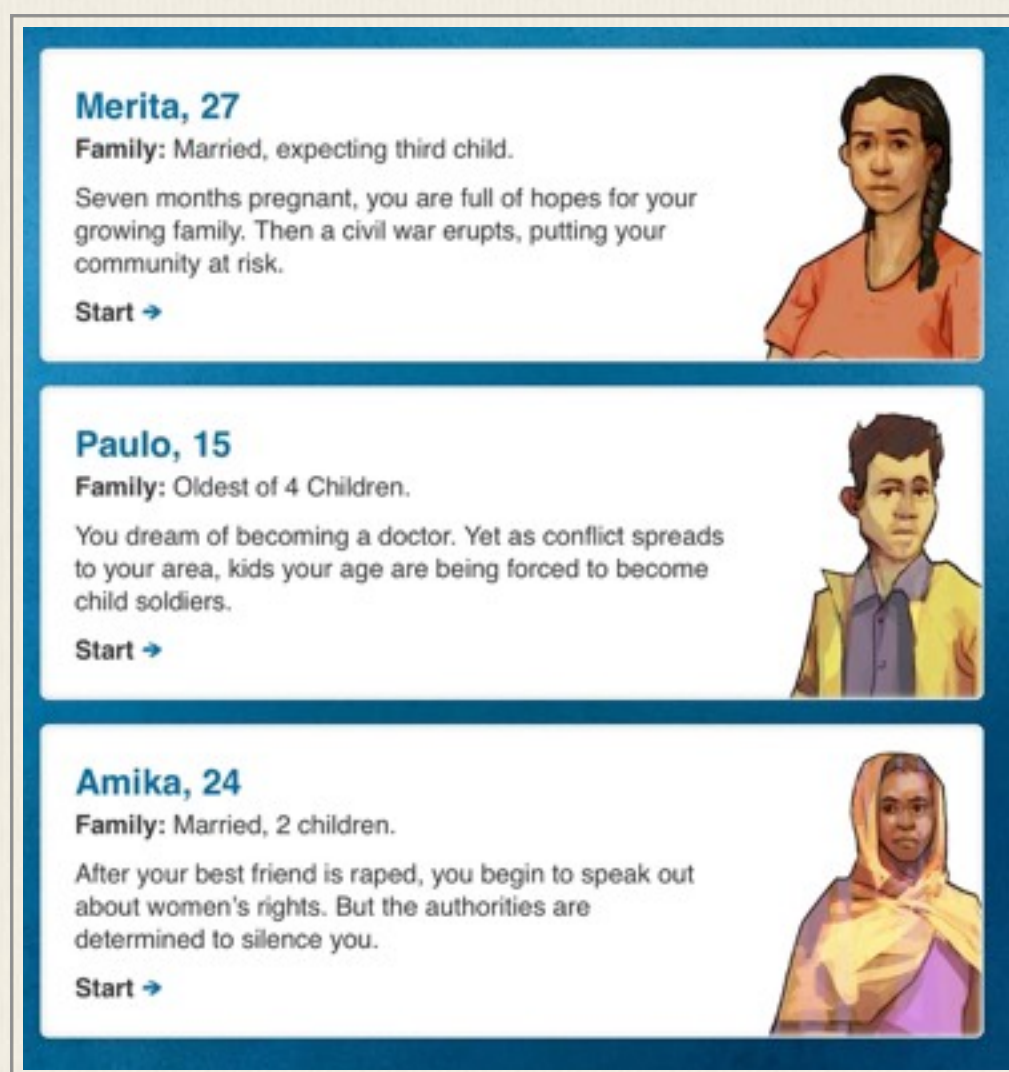
Best of all, it is free!



In the Classroom

This app would allow students to place themselves in a refugees shoes and witness how their choices would affect them in situations that a refugee would commonly face. Every decision makes a difference, and could be the choice between life and death.

Educators could use this as a pre-lesson activity for a class that deals with world issues, introducing the topic of refugees

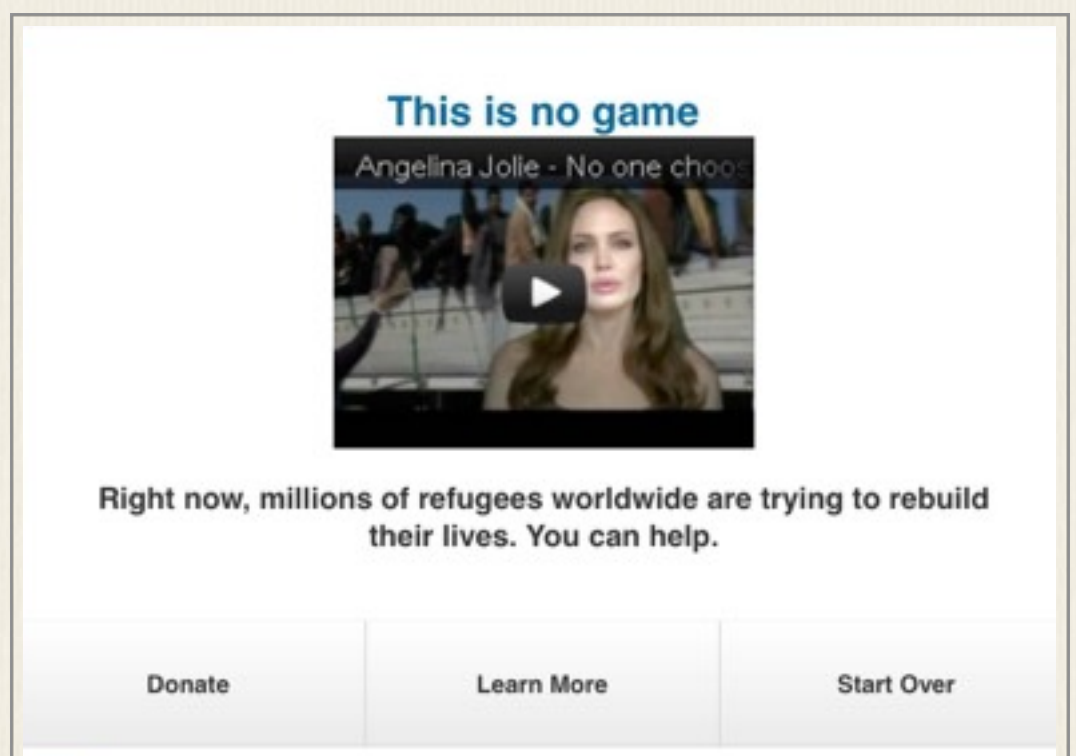




SAMR

The SAMR (Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition) model is a scale which can be used to measure the impact that a given technology has. Substitution and Augmentation fall under the enhancement category, replacing another technology or resource with little to no difference in accessibility. Technology that allows for a task to be redesigned fall under modification and redefinition, and considered transformative in the classroom.

This app falls under the Modification rating for SAMR because of the link that leads to the UNHCR website, as well links to articles, allowing for further exploration of information and alteration of the original assignment with additional resources that were previously unavailable. Without this feature, it would fall to the substitution level of the scale.





Cons and Possible Solutions

It may take up to 15 or 20 minutes to complete depending on the choices you make, because many times the choices could end with the character's death or indefinite results that are not ideal for the end of the storyline. Having the students work together to come to a decision may reduce the time, as well as fostering a cooperative learning environment.

At the end of a storyline, the game takes you to an ending screen that has several links, including multiple social media websites. Use of these links could be proactively avoided by giving the students instructions to go to the link for the UNHCR website following the completion of their assigned story, or having them discuss with others about what they learned from the app.

Some might consider this app too dark for students, but it could be argued that the topic of refugees is unavoidably dark and students must accept that fact in order to fully understand the issues.



Differentiation

Students favoring linguistics would get the most out of this app due to the format. It relies heavily on reading in addition to the accompanying art.

Refugee would be useful for visual learners as well. The hand-drawn backgrounds and characters tie the story together and develop empathy.

It is also available in English and Spanish, which could help some ELL students as well. Unfortunately, it appears that this only affects the app if the device is in Spanish because there is no way to alter settings in the app itself.

To be honest, beyond the empathy aspect, this app is not the best in regard to differentiation.



Credits

All screenshots taken by me and used under fair use exemption U.S. Copyright Law.

© 2017, Rebecca Crist.